



# OLD AGE SECURITY PROGRAM

March 1999

## Guaranteed Income Supplement

3 1761 11557039 2



Human Resources  
Development Canada

Développement des  
ressources humaines Canada

Canada

ISPB 184-03-99E

This booklet on the Guaranteed Income Supplement contains general information only. In case of disputes, the wording and provisions of the *Old Age Security Act* and Regulations prevail.

Available in alternate format.

Produced by:

Human Resources Development  
Canada  
Income Security Programs  
Communications

March 1999

Internet: [www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp)

For additional copies of this publication, please write or fax indicating the catalogue number: ISPB-184-03-99E

Enquiries Centre  
Human Resources Development  
Canada  
Hull, QC K1A 0J9

FAX (819) 953-7260


Aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Le Supplément de revenu garanti*  
ISPB-184-03-99F

Cat. No. H76-57/1999E

ISBN: 0-662-27756-2

# Table of Contents

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| <b>The Old Age Security Program</b>           | 3    |
| <b>The Guaranteed Income Supplement</b>       | 5    |
| Applying for the Guaranteed Income Supplement | 5    |
| How we calculate your benefits                | 8    |
| Receiving the Supplement                      | 11   |
| Filing your income tax return                 | 15   |
| Appealing a decision                          | 15   |
| Protecting information about you              | 16   |
| Other public retirement benefits              | 17   |
| <b>More Information</b>                       | 19   |



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2022 with funding from  
University of Toronto

# The Old Age Security Program

The Old Age Security program (OAS), which is financed from general revenues of the Government of Canada, is the cornerstone of Canada's retirement income system. The OAS is a monthly payment that goes to almost all people over 65 who have lived in Canada for a certain time.

OAS is different from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). People pay into the CPP when they work, and the program provides payments to workers and their families.

OAS and CPP combine with company pensions and retirement investments to provide Canadians with one of the best retirement income systems in the world.

This booklet describes the Guaranteed Income Supplement—one of three Old Age Security programs. The other OAS programs are:

## **The Old Age Security Pension**

Most people over age 65 who meet the residence requirements receive this pension each month. For more information, see the booklet *Old Age Security Pension*.

## **The Spouse's Allowance and the Widowed Spouse's Allowance**

You can apply for the Spouse's Allowance if you meet three conditions:

- You are 60 to 64 years old.
- You have lived in Canada as an adult for at least 10 years.
- Your spouse receives or is entitled to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

The Widowed Spouse's Allowance is also available to low-income widows or widowers who are 60 to 64 years old and meet certain residence requirements. For more information, see the booklet *Spouse's Allowance* and *Widowed Spouse's Allowance*.

**The Guaranteed Income Supplement** provides additional money, on top of the Old Age Security pension, to low-income seniors living in Canada. To be eligible for the Supplement, you must be receiving the Old Age Security pension and meet the income requirements explained in this booklet.

Please see the booklet *Old Age Security Pension* if you have questions about whether you qualify for the Old Age Security pension.

# The Guaranteed Income Supplement

## APPLYING FOR THE GUARANTEED INCOME SUPPLEMENT

You must apply to receive the Guaranteed Income Supplement. There are two ways to apply:

- You can request an application form by calling the toll-free number listed at the end of this booklet.
- You can indicate on your application for the Old Age Security pension that you want to apply for the Supplement as well.

If you did not qualify for a Supplement in the past, but you think you might be eligible now, you should apply as soon as possible. Call us for an application form.

Normally, individuals must apply for the Supplement on their own behalf. If you are applying for someone else, please contact us for more information.

## **What documents will I need to provide?**

If you are married and applying for the first time, you must provide a marriage certificate. Common-law couples must sign a “statutory declaration.” See below for more details.

**Couples married in Canada**—If you don’t have your marriage certificate, there are two ways to get it:

- You can get a certificate from the church in which you were married.
- You can contact the Registrar of Vital Statistics in the capital city of the province or territory in which you were married.

**Couples married outside Canada**—If you don’t know how to get a copy of your marriage certificate, call us.

**Common-law relationships**—You must provide a statutory declaration that states the date you and your spouse began living together. Call us for a copy of this form and for help to complete the declaration.

## Do I need to renew the Supplement every year?

The Guaranteed Income Supplement is based on your annual income, or the combined annual income of you and your spouse (married or common-law). Since your annual income can change from year to year, **you must renew the Supplement each year.**

However, beginning in 1999, most seniors can renew their Supplement automatically. In most cases, if you file your income tax return by April 30, Revenue Canada will give us the necessary income information.

If you do not file a tax return, or if we need more information, we will send you a renewal form. If you receive a form from us, you must complete and return it as soon as you have all the necessary income information.

Each July, you will receive a letter that tells you the amount of your new monthly payment. Note that we used to do this each April, but starting in 1999 we will give you more time to reapply.

If you do not reapply for the Supplement in the spring, or if your income is high enough so that you no longer need it, you will only get the basic Old Age Security pension starting in July of that year.

## **HOW WE CALCULATE YOUR BENEFITS**

We base the Supplement on your marital status, annual income and on the amount of the Old Age Security pension you are entitled to receive. If you are married or living in a common-law relationship, we look at the combined annual income of you and your spouse. The following chart shows one person's maximum monthly benefits as of January 1, 1999. Most seniors get less than these maximum amounts because they have income from other sources. These amounts may rise over time to keep up with inflation.

| <b>GIS</b>  | <b>Maximum monthly benefit</b> | <b>Maximum income*</b> |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Single person   | \$488.23                       | \$11,736               |
| Couple receiving only 1 OAS pension                     | \$488.23                       | \$28,416               |
| Couple receiving 2 OAS pensions                         | \$318.01                       | \$15,312               |
| Couple receiving 1 OAS pension and 1 Spouse's Allowance | \$318.01                       | \$28,416               |

\* We cannot give you benefits if your income, or the combined income of you and your spouse, other than the Old Age Security pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement, is more than the maximum income shown on the chart.

### **What if I marry or separate?**

If you marry or separate, or if your spouse dies, you must inform us since it may affect your benefits.

If you or your spouse are separated for reasons beyond your control (for example, if one of you has to live in a hospital or nursing home), you can each be considered as a single person if that will give you a higher monthly payment.

## What do you consider to be income?

When applying for the Supplement, you must report the following income:

- Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan benefits
- Private pension income and superannuation
- Foreign pension income
- RRSPs that you cashed
- Employment Insurance benefits
- Interest on any savings
- Any capital gains or dividends
- Income from any rental properties
- Any employment income
- Income from other sources

Benefits from the Old Age Security program, including the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Spouse's Allowance, are **not** considered income. Consult the application form for more details about what to include as income.

## What happens if my income drops?

In some situations, like when you stop working or when your pension income drops, we can calculate your Supplement by estimating your income for **this** year, instead of using last year's income. If you or your spouse have a lower income this year for either of these reasons, you should let us know. Your benefits may increase.

## RECEIVING THE SUPPLEMENT

If you are eligible for the Supplement, we will add it to your Old Age Security pension payment each month.

Payments usually arrive in the last three banking days of each month. If your payment is late more than a week, or if you lose your payment, please call us. If you apply late and are otherwise eligible, we can give you a back payment of up to 12 months.

## **Can you send the payment to my bank?**

Yes. Normally, we deposit your pension payment directly into your bank account through our Direct Deposit service. Although payment by cheque is still possible, Direct Deposit offers several advantages:

- Your deposit will always be on time and you can start using the money and earning interest immediately.
- Your payment can never be lost, stolen or damaged.
- Your pension will automatically be deposited into your account if you are ill, on vacation or travelling.

Call us to learn more about this free service. If you wish to sign up for the service over the telephone, be sure to have this information when you call:

### **Personal Information**

- your Social Insurance Number;
- your telephone number, including the area code; and
- your current residential address, including the postal code.

## **Banking Information**

- the name of your bank or financial institution;
- the branch number of the bank; and
- your bank account number.

If you have a chequing account, you can find the banking information on your cheque.

## **What happens if I move?**

If you are planning to move, you must tell us your new address and postal code as soon as possible. This will allow us to update our records and make sure that your payment gets to you on time. Even if your payments are deposited directly into your bank account, we still need to know your new address so we can send you important information and your yearly income tax slip.

## **Can I receive my Supplement outside Canada?**

The Government of Canada designed the Guaranteed Income Supplement to support low-income pensioners living in Canada. For this reason, if you leave Canada we will pay you for the month you leave, and for six months after that. Then payments will stop. For

example, if you left Canada in January, we would send payments until the end of July. After July, the payments would stop.

If you **do** stay outside Canada for a longer period, you can always reapply when you return to live in Canada. Whether you live in Canada or abroad, we pay the Supplement in Canadian dollars.

### **Will I get cost-of-living increases?**

We will increase your pension payments to reflect any increases in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index. We apply any increases every three months—in January, April, July, and October.

Your monthly payments will **not** go down if the cost of living falls.

### **Can my benefits stop?**

We stop paying the Guaranteed Income Supplement if one of the following things happens:

- You do not reapply for the Supplement each year.
- Your income, or the total income of you and your spouse, is more than the maximum amount allowed.
- You leave Canada for more than six months in a row.

- You die. If your spouse is receiving the Supplement or Spouse's Allowance, payments will continue, based on his or her income.

## **FILING YOUR INCOME TAX RETURN**

Your Supplement is **not** considered taxable income. However, you must still report it on your tax return.

## **APPEALING A DECISION**

If you disagree with a decision that affects your pension, you have the right to an explanation. Call us first and we can usually settle the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response, you may request a "reconsideration." To do this, you must send a letter to the Regional Director of Income Security Programs within 90 days of receiving notice of our decision. Please call us for the mailing address for your region. In your letter, tell the Regional Director:

- your name;
- your address;
- your Social Insurance Number; and
- your reason(s) for making the appeal.

If you are not satisfied with the Regional Director's response, you can appeal the decision to a Review Tribunal.

## PROTECTING INFORMATION ABOUT YOU

Your privacy is protected.

The *Old Age Security Act* and Regulations ensure that only specific agencies authorized by the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada are entitled to review relevant parts of your records. Personal information in your file **cannot** be given to other agencies or individuals without your consent.

The *Access to Information Act* also prevents the release of information about you without your consent. However, there are two exceptions: information can be released if it has already been made public or if the release is allowed under the *Privacy Act*. The government can **only** use information for the purpose for which it was collected, except to comply with a warrant or subpoena, or to enforce a law.

## Can I have access to information on my file?

You have the right to review information about you that is kept on file by the Government of Canada. To help citizens get access to information about themselves, the Government has published *Info Source: Sources of federal government information*. To make a request, you must complete an information request form. These forms and *Info Source* are available in government offices open to the public, such as a Human Resources Development Canada office. They are also available at public libraries, most rural post offices and in Canadian missions abroad.

## OTHER PUBLIC RETIREMENT BENEFITS

If you contributed to either the Canada Pension Plan or the Quebec Pension Plan in at least one year from January 1966, you may be eligible for a retirement pension at age 65. If you have retired or substantially reduced your hours of work, you could also qualify for a reduced retirement pension as early as age 60 if sufficient contributions have been made.

Disability and survivor benefits are also available under the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan if sufficient contributions have been made. You must apply to receive any of these benefits.

Call us for more information about the Canada Pension Plan. For more information on the Quebec Pension Plan, contact:

La Régie des rentes du Québec  
P.O. Box 5200  
Québec, QC G1K 7S9

You may be entitled to benefits under the Employment Insurance program. Please contact your local Human Resource Centre of Canada.

You may also be entitled to benefits from other federal programs such as War Veterans Allowances. Contact Veterans Affairs Canada for more information.

Your provincial and municipal governments may offer income assistance and services to seniors. Please contact these governments directly.

# More Information

For more information about the Old Age Security Program and the Canada Pension Plan, please call Human Resources Development Canada at the telephone numbers below. The calls, which are free of charge, can only be made within North America.

**1 800 277-9914 (English)**

**1 800 277-9915 (French)**

If you have a hearing or speech impairment and you use a TDD/TTY device, please call **1 800 255-4786**.

Our lines are busiest at the beginning and end of each month. If your business can wait, it's best to call at other times.

Please have your Social Insurance Number ready.

The following booklets, as well as information on international social security agreements, are available from Human Resources Development Canada:

*Old Age Security Pension*

*Spouse's Allowance and Widowed Spouse's Allowance*

*Retirement Pension — Canada Pension Plan*

*Disability Benefits — Canada Pension Plan*

*Survivor Benefits — Canada Pension Plan*

*Credit Splitting upon divorce or separation — Canada Pension Plan*

Much of this material is also available on the Department's Web site:  
[www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/isp)

---

## NOTES

